

Let's



citizen education
social justice
environmental action

truth in action with love + kindness

3 Tryon Farm Road | South Glastonbury | CT 06073

President:

Bruce Bowman

Vice-President:

Ketti Marks

Secretary:

Chris Gullotta

Treasurer:

Jill Grieveson

Directors:

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Kristi Vitelli

RE: H.B. 5204 (RAISED) *AN ACT CONCERNING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND FAIR SHARE PLANS FOR MUNICIPALITIES TO INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING*
March 2022

Recommended Committee Action: SUPPORT THE BILL

TALK (Truth in Action with Love & Kindness) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization in Glastonbury, founded in January 2017 by Glastonbury residents Chris Gullotta and Jill Grieveson. TALK's mission is to foster dialogue about social and political issues, inform TALK members and local residents about those issues, and fight injustice through truth, compassion, and nonviolence.

The lack of affordable housing opportunities in Glastonbury and surrounding communities has been a priority issue for TALK for over three years now. We have asked ourselves what we and others can do to address Connecticut's entrenched segregation and the inability of so many low-income residents and residents of color to secure affordable housing and to live in high opportunity towns such as Glastonbury.

TALK supports H.B. 5204 and its underlying Fair Share Zoning model because they establish a definitive role for every non-impooverished Connecticut town in remedying our state's segregation and affordable housing crisis. H.B. 5204 allocates the state's affordable housing need by region, and then allocates the regional need to each town based on an assessment of the town's current affordable housing resources and its financial capacity to accommodate more affordable housing and support for vital local services. The beauty of H.B. 5204 is that it enables each town to retain control over its own zoning and planning functions and figure out how best to meet its fair share responsibility in stages over a ten-year period.

Over the past three years, TALK members have learned about affordable and mixed income housing issues and solutions. We know that there are more than 1100 families on the waiting list for Glastonbury Housing Authority's 470 affordable housing units. We know that over the next 10 years, the state needs approximately 135,000 affordable housing units just for extremely low-income (30% or less of HUD adjusted area median income) and severely cost-burdened (paying 50% or more of income on housing) individuals and families. We have hosted multiple presentations in Glastonbury on the need for, and benefit of, more affordable housing, and have commented at numerous town government meetings to request the expansion of affordable housing options.

TALK is encouraged to learn that there is support on both sides of the aisle for remedying the state's entrenched segregation through expanding affordable housing opportunities. Plenty of Glastonbury residents believe it is the just and right thing for our state and town governments to work together to ensure that more affordable housing is available, and that low-income residents are provided the choice to live in high opportunity towns such as Glastonbury. Plenty of Glastonbury residents recognize, too, that our children and grandchildren are better equipped to live in today's world if they grow up in racially, ethnically, economically, and culturally diverse communities. The time has come for an expansive piece of legislation to remedy our state's affordable housing shortage and profound segregation. TALK asks the Committee members to vote in favor of H.B. 5204 and support its passage by the Senate and House.